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Re-colonizing spaces of memorializing: The case of the Chattri Indian Memorial, UK

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Abstract

This article inspects the ways that spaces of war memorialization are organized and re-organized through official and unofficial meaning-making activities. It aims to contribute to the discussion of the ‘value’ of memorializing by examining a multifaceted space of remembrance and commemoration: the Chattri Indian Memorial built near Brighton, United Kingdom. The article brings postcolonial perspectives to explore how memorializing has been organized here, focusing on the activities of once-colonized people and the affective, embodied aspects of organizing practices. Built in 1921 to honour Indian soldiers who fought in World War I, the Chattri evolved from a colonial instrument to symbol and space for ethnic-Indian group activities. The study employed historical, visual and ethnographic methods to study the tangible monument and the changing nature of the memorializing activities carried out around the monument. Memorializing is conceptualized within three inter-related processes: colonizing, de-colonizing and re-colonizing to examine how forms and practices of memorialization constitute a values-laden organizing system.

Keywords

Affect, Chattri, Indian, memorialization, re-colonizing

This article focuses on the phenomenon of ‘memorializing’ as an important way that society organizes and valorizes space. It specifically aims to contribute to studies of the organization of memorializing by drawing on postcolonial perspectives. It examines a multifaceted site of commemoration and remembrance, the Chattri Indian Memorial near Brighton, United Kingdom, and the ways that this space has been organized and re-organized through physical, spatial and affective meaning-making activities. Standing on the edge of Brighton in a once-remote part of the Sussex Downs, the Chattri Memorial was built in 1921 to honour Indian soldiers who fought on the Western Front during the World War I. Designed to render

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permanent the ideas and ideals of a particular social and political milieu, the meaning and value of the Chattri has been reshaped through the years by local social, cultural and political activities. A study of the Chattri Indian Memorial was undertaken in 2013–2014 as part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Cultural Value Project. AHRC sought to generate new language and methods for understanding the value of 'culture' in the United Kingdom, beginning with the cultural experience itself. Memorializing was situated in this project as a cultural phenomenon, involving engagements with the past as a process of meaning-making and as a practice of cultural production (Macdonald, 2013). The Chattri was studied as both a symbolic cultural object with physical and spatial attributes, and as an embodied cultural activity with ritual and affective elements. But the Chattri was also selected because it was a space of cultural experience for a non-Western ethnic minority—the only research with the AHRC project to explicitly examine cultural activities generated by such a group.

This article aims to further our understanding of how memorializing operates as an organizational process that constitutes and validates cultural significance. It is a process that signifies aspects of the past as important: the making-valuable, through conscious acts, those objects, places, events, practices, memories, ideas, even sensibilities that are attached to the past in some way. This article explores how meanings have been enacted at the Chattri Memorial through physical forms, symbolic gestures, embodied practices and affective occupations of space, in their changing historical dimensions. It argues that 'value' or importance is signified in these memorializing processes through the symbolic *sign* or tangible representation, and from embodied and intangible practices that *mark* the sign through felt experiences (Simon, 2010). But further, it draws attention to the strong influence of colonialist regimes of knowledge on the organization of culture in this case, inspecting how the Chattri changed in value as it evolved from colonial instrument to symbol and space for ethnic-Indian group activities. The article deploys a postcolonial frame of reference to discuss the shifting meanings and valuations at the Chattri. The application of postcolonial theory here is intended to decentre how knowledge about 'organization' is constructed and signified: it foregrounds the views and activities of minority, colonized and racialized people, and it highlights the embodied, affective, space-making elements of organizing practices.

This article begins with an exploration of the place of postcolonial theories in organizational studies and their applicability to understanding memorializing at the Chattri as an organizational process. It outlines the historical and qualitative methodological approaches used to study the cultural object and its attributes, and the embodied cultural activities at this site. The article then presents and analyses, using a postcolonial lens, the empirical data within three interconnected phases of memorializing, arguing that the historical and present-day memorializing at the Chattri can be theorized as the colonization, de-colonization and re-colonization of space. The conclusion returns to the question of how memorialization as material form or sign, and as embodied or felt practice, fundamentally organizes meaning-making and the shaping of values.

Organizing and postcolonial studies

Colonizing implies the subjecting of others to a dominating force's reality and keeping them in a subordinate position. Coloniality implies not only how the colonized were subjected to exploitation of their resources, but also to the domination of Eurocentric epistemic, moral and symbolic resources in ways that reflected and reproduced empire (Mignolo, 2007). Those native to colonized nations were characterized as deficient or less civilized, and in need of 'improvement' in their ways of thinking and doing using paternalistic or coercive methods. Such ideas were underscored by belief in racial hierarchies, which excluded or denigrated non-Westerners in a process of 'Othering' (Said, 1978).

Frantz Fanon argues that colonization and racism must be understood as modes of organization: systemized hierarchies based on the body, but materially reproduced within space (Kipfer, 2007). Frenkel and Shenhav (2006) point out the necessity of understanding these processes within organizing structures and organizing practices. Studies of organizations and management have not focused on colonial and postcolonial topics and perspectives until recent years. Jack et al. (2011) note in their overview of postcolonial theory in management and organization studies that 'postcolonial' is a complex concept approached from diverse scholarly perspectives and goals, and differently applied to epistemic, historical and experiential phenomena (p. 278). Some researchers argue that even when non-Western cases have been studied, Western assumptions and epistemologies have predominated (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Mir and Mir, 2013; Westwood et al., 2014). Some writers implicate organization and management knowledge-making as an instrument in the continuation of coloniality within the discourse and practices of business and development (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Prasad, 2003; Westwood et al., 2014). They contend that everyday practices of organizing and activities on the periphery have been considered less valid or 'inferior' topics of study than the preoccupations of the Western centre. Postcolonial scholars seek to bring such seemingly unorganized or 'management-less' people and their excluded forms of organizing into the academic conversation, and highlight how different factors affect their organizing strategies (Imas and Weston, 2012: 220). Raza Mir and Ali Mir (2013) encourage 'breaking the stranglehold of the West in circumscribing what gets to be theorized, and what gets represented as being beyond the scope of formal discussion' in their quest to 'irrigate the field of an alternative organizational theory' (p. 92).

The Chattri study continues the decentring of the study of 'organization' through an inspection of memorializing as a system of human organizing. Its postcolonial approach emphasizes the practices and perspectives of peripheral, non-Western peoples as the organizing agents, and emphasizes organizing processes rather than organizations as objects of inquiry (Jack et al., 2011). Frenkel and Shenhav (2006) write that organizational studies employ two forms of postcolonial analysis: Orientalist perspectives, examining binary distinctions as per Said, or hybridity, which implies fusing and mutual relations between colonizers and the colonized as per Bhabha. Said (1978) critically inspects what he saw as the patronizing Western colonial attitude that perceives and represents non-Western societies, cultures and values as essentialized, static and undeveloped, and Western society as developed, rational, flexible and superior. His formulations accentuate differences between colonizer and colonized: 'the West and the non-West, in binary asymmetrical terms; the former considered superior, civilized, developed, moral, scientific; the latter inferior, uncivilized, backward, immoral and superstitious' (Jack et al., 2011: 277). Bhabha (1994) theorized the ways that colonized peoples have subverted or resisted or combined or translated Western dominance to create a 'Third Space' where different cultures interact, and where new identities and affinities are forming and being organized. A split in the identity of the colonized might involve ambivalence, hybridity and/or mimicry, with colonized subjects partially taking on the culture of the colonizers in ways that involve partial presence and recognition but is also disruptive of the authorized discourses: 'almost the same but not quite' (p. 85). Hybridity has been a useful concept to account for the processes of continuity, adaptation and transformation that occur in organizational settings (Yousfi, 2014). This article sees a place for both analytical attentions, and describes how binary and hybrid organizing processes are deployed at the Chattri site.

Memorializing as it occurs through war monuments and remembrance rituals can be seen as particularly 'colonial' in their rhetorical nature, intended to influence accepted social values, and colonize an imagined future with those values (Ashworth et al., 2007: 3). After the Great War, symbolic objects and practices were created that structured what was considered 'normal' ways of commemoration and remembrance. By appearing as given realities, the modes employed to organize memorializing

activities continue to be 'protected from social criticism, and thus are able to demarcate behaviours and mould identities' (Ibarra-Colado, 2006: 473). In the United Kingdom, the shape of Great War monuments, and the actions and values conveyed in Remembrance Day ceremonies, remain the same today, and are jealously protected from change, 'lest we forget'. The postcolonial perspective offers a new way of thinking, introducing marginalized subjectivities and novel concepts into the discussion of such organizing processes. Since the experiences of such people on the outside of mainstream society tend to be de-territorialized, adapted and hybrid (Ibarra-Colado, 2006), recognizing their cultural 'making' as an ongoing organizing practice allows very dissimilar symbolic, material and imaginary codes into what is accepted and valued as 'normal' memorializing.

Critical examination of how the subjectivities of once-colonial people influence their organizing activities enables multiple and hybrid ways of thinking about spaces and processes of organization. The organizational reality of the Chattri is conceptualized in the following analysis within three different phases of memorializing defined as *colonizing*, *de-colonizing* and *re-colonizing* to illustrate both binary and hybrid processes. These three cultural processes overlapped and competed within the perceptions, practices and historical reality of different data sources within the study. The monumental structure that framed the memorializing at the Chattri defined the organizing process within a historical coloniality that clearly separated British and Indian identities, but subsequent interactions with and around the physical memorial responded variously to that colonial positioning—including acceptance, appropriation and resistance. These multiple responses to the original colonizing can be seen as 'de-colonizing' or as reactions *in relation to* the colonial centre (Mignolo, 2007). The complexity of these relationships are suggested by Bhabha (1994), where agency may include hybrid, ambivalent and mimicking cultural practices at the same time as creating something new.

But additional insights are offered here by introducing the notion of *re-colonizing* as a useful concept for understanding organizational processes, acts of organizing and the participants in organizational practices. This concept describes how material practices and actual bodies caught up in space-making activities re-signify and re-organize a space with no regard for the colonial centre. *Re-colonizing* is positioned in this article as a transformation of once-colonized forms and relations: the replacement of one system with a new one. It is understood as something that can take place not only in the periphery or 'the colonies', but also in the centre of Empire by once-colonized minorities acting at the centre (Jack et al., 2011: 285). Writing about the Global South, Alcadipani et al. (2012) argue that organization and management studies have tended to ignore studies of excluded or peripheral communities who now exist and are increasingly significant in the centre (p. 140). In studying the Chattri Memorial, the gaze returns to the imperial centre with a case study of organizing by ex-colonials within England, the heart of Anglo colonialism.

As well as bringing the focus back to the colonial centre, the concept of re-colonizing allows an understanding of re-organizing-in-process, where organizational systems are in a state of constant renewal: ongoing re-structuring results from breaking down, reconfiguring and creating new relationships and systems of knowledge (Scolari, 2012). The process of breaking down and replacing dominant systems requires active and ongoing reform; in the case of the Chattri, enactments of coloniality on British soil were subsequently taken over by formerly colonized people themselves. This involved de-colonizing as a dynamic process of both resistance and appropriation, and re-colonizing as replacing and offering new ways of thinking and organizing space.

Memorializing structures and practices

The Chattri Indian Memorial is an ideal location to demonstrate commemoration and remembrance as an ongoing process of meaning-making and valuation. The broader research project

studied the Chattri site and practices, following Bourdieu, as a complex cultural field through which symbolic, expressive and meaning-making aspects of social behaviour were publicly enacted. Memorializing at the Chattri was understood as both the formal material object and ritual practices, and as the informal space-creating practices of people in this location: both structural and subjective aspects of social action that express a signification of place (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The research combined visual and textual examination of the tangible object and how it was emplaced in space (the monument), with ethnographic inspection of discourses and non-representational, experiential encounters with the site (practices). The goal of the research was to assemble multiple cognitive and experiential types of knowledge (McIlvenny and Noy, 2011). Bringing both objective and subjective elements together enabled the analysis of how memorializing consciously organized, through objects and practices, to constitute and validate culture in its changing historical dimensions. The inspection of the material aspects of memorialization included a review of secondary historical documentation, and visual and textual analysis of the physical site (Emmison and Smith, 2000; Kress, 2010).¹ The methodology compared this symbolic and rhetorical structuring of meaning through tangible forms and rituals, to emergent valuation as enacted through practices at the Chattri and as voiced through participants' comments (Fairclough, 2003; Pink, 2013).²

Lefebvre (1991) reflects this interest in the differences between structured systems and emergent or 'lived' systems in his theorizing about the social production of space. Within the formalized space of remembrance certain practices are reiterated while other activities adopt 'habits of the body' that unconsciously employ tacit ways of behaving. In the case of the Chattri Memorial, while constrained within the 'conceived' space of a monumental structure, the memorializing rituals embed both routines and habits of the body within a 'perceived' space with tacit ways of doing, but as well, incorporate imaginings of doing or 'lived' spaces (Dale, 2005: 657). Part of the Chattri's uniqueness lay in its emergent elements, which were captured through the qualitative part of the research. Feldman and Feldman (2006) argue that remembrance knowledge-making practice is 'a collective, heterogeneous phenomenon constantly in the making', but further, that 'this social and participatory conception of knowledge goes hand in hand with a conception of the organization as a distributed, decentred, and emergent system' (p. 862). Such emergent organizing suggests Lefebvre's concept of lived space, which embodies both conceived and perceived spaces without being reducible to either. Beyes and Steyaert (2012) take the idea of lived space further, suggesting the concept of 'spacing' as a non-representational way to think about informal practices like those studied at the Chattri. Spacing describes ongoing material practices of the everyday that are embodied, affective, sensational, and with a novelty that expresses a minor politics (2012: 51). Thus, it can be seen as 'more-than-representational' (Waterton, 2012: 66), conceiving the world in practical terms in a process of 'perpetual becoming' (Thrift, 1996).

In the next section, these cultural data gathered at the Chattri will be discussed within a postcolonial frame of reference to understand how organization of memorializing has been structured here by colonial forms and practices, but how affective and conscious space-making by once-colonized people have changed meaning of the memorial. Findings are discussed and analysed within three historical moments that represent the three phases of memorializing here, *colonizing*, *de-colonizing* and *re-colonizing*: the establishment of the monument, the re-use of the site by the Legion after the World War II, and the new ceremony developed after 2000 by local Asian residents, in its ritual and affective experience. Each historical moment of memorialization is scrutinized as a specific 'colonial' manifestation in terms of 'what' aspects of culture have been emphasized, 'who' expresses and makes knowledge about those aspects, and by what processes or 'how' culture has been planned, expressed and experienced.



Figure 1. The Chattri Memorial, built in 1921. Photo by the author.

Colonizing

The Chattri Indian Memorial is both a material historic monument and a space of immaterial commemoration and remembrance practices. The white marble memorial, shaped like a domed ‘Chattri’ or umbrella in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, is situated high and isolated above a picturesque valley on the Sussex Downs near Brighton, United Kingdom, with the sea visible in the distance (Figure 1). The site has been animated most years since 1951 with commemorative services each June followed by a tea and socializing attended by descendants, legionnaires, local residents, ethnic organizations, officials and other individuals. The Memorial was erected in 1921 to honour soldiers from undivided-India whose remains were cremated on this spot in 1914–1915. During the World War I more than 1 million Indian army soldiers served alongside British troops, with over 140,000 Indian soldiers actively serving in Europe (Corrigan, 1999). Between 1914 and 1916, 4306 wounded soldiers were hospitalized at the Royal Pavilion estate in the city of Brighton and 74 of these soldiers died there (Hyson and Lester, 2012). Of these, 21 Muslim soldiers were buried at the Shah Jahan Mosque near Woking, and 53 Sikh and Hindu men who died were cremated on a *ghat* at the Chattri site, and their ashes scattered into the sea.

Why the choice was made to cremate the soldiers here is not recorded, but there was an intentional emplacement of the burning *ghat* at this particular location that subsequently affected all human activities here. Possibly its isolation from town on the high downs made it suitable for burning but also hid the activity from view. But this location seems appropriate for memorializing, for solemnity and spirituality is palpable. The choice to cremate the remains on this particular spot began the sequence of organizational practices here on the downs, from which flowed the structures and behaviours in this space. This very basic organized practice—the treatment of the dead—is the ritualized enactment of particular values that draws people together in commonality (Carey, 1989). The cremation *ghats* have affected the shape of the memorial architecture, the arrangement of gardens, and the enactment patterns of formal ceremonies, but also have organized the nature of the space’s informal uses and behaviours, and the intensity of emotion felt by humans who visit.

The Chattri monument was instigated, as with most monuments, as a political tool, but in this particular case as a specifically colonial tool. This monument was not included as part of the

broader government programme of Great War memorial construction across Britain, which were aimed at affirming local connectedness to national efforts and enabling remembrance of fellow residents who died in war. The Great War had been a catastrophic event in the lives of Britons, and the process of marking its magnitude required a highly organized state response (Wilson, 2013). Memorializing through prominent monuments and the formalized annual remembrance rituals on 11 November became state-generated means to re-focus popular sentiments about the war around the cultural value of ultimate sacrifice. This ethos was organized visually and physically: as well as occupying central locations in everyday urban spaces, the stone aesthetics imparted a sense of higher moral authority (Abousnnouga and Machin, 2011). These war monuments channelled emotions and set-in-stone a collective ethos about the legitimacy of war.

But the Chattri Indian Memorial was intended as a material gesture to re-focus popular *Indian* sentiments about the war, aimed at maintaining Britain's imperial presence in India (Hyson and Lester, 2012: 19). The British government at the time was keen to portray a good image in its handling of its colonial soldiers during and after the war. Funeral arrangements for Indian soldiers who died in the Brighton hospitals had been especially important to officials. Hyson and Lester argue that 'a particular value was placed on the bodies of these men: ... their sacrifice was especially significant in an order of imperial power jeopardised during the war' (p. 21). The government sanctioned cremation at this site north of Brighton to accommodate the practices of the Hindu and Sikh soldiers. The India Office, which directly administered all colonial affairs related to India, was persuaded by the Brighton mayor to construct a memorial on the location of the cremation *ghats* (Donovan, 2005: n.p.). The plan to memorialize at Brighton drew media attention at the time, but was understood by the popular press as a desire to monumentalize the sacrifice of Indian soldiers in a manner similar to other UK war monuments (e.g. *The Times*, 1916). The subjectivity of the Indian soldiers expressed by public discourse was that of loyal colonials coming to the aid of the mother country.

But visually and materially, this memorial cannot be read as nationalistic in any way, nor does it appeal to war or soldiering. Its design contrasts with aesthetic strategies employed at other war remembrance monuments in the United Kingdom. The India Office had noted 'that where cremation has been resorted to, a simple monument of an oriental character should be erected on the site of the crematorium' (Donovan, 2005: n.p.). This 'oriental' design is unique, incorporating a dome and eight pillars built from white Sicilian marble. The 'soft' fanciful and curvaceous design suggests an emotional connotation more in line with its imperial role as a gesture of appeasement towards colonial India. The columned dome is encircled by a series of granite platforms and steps including three large slabs that clearly indicate the original crematory bases. The monument, surrounded by a 2-acre turfed garden and landscaping features on the lonely hillside, evokes a profound sensibility of spirituality: it feels like a cemetery more than a war monument, with the crematory bases marking where bodies were burned at this spot.

The inscription on the marble base of the Chattri gives a textual indication of the combined funereal and colonial purpose of the memorial. It reads in Hindi and English:

To the memory of all the Indian soldiers who gave their lives for their King-Emperor in the Great War, this monument, erected on the site of the funeral pyre where the Hindus and Sikhs who died in hospital at Brighton, passed through the fire, is in grateful admiration and brotherly affection dedicated.

This inscription directly speaks to the subject positions of the 'King-Emperor' and Indian soldiers, as well as a direct reference and familial tone about those individuals, two attributes unlike other WWI monuments in the United Kingdom. The 'brotherly affection' might be seen as soldierly camaraderie, but also read as a paternalistic mode of address reflecting Said's (1978) binary where the subject is situated as childlike and inferior (Spencer, 2006).



Figure 2. Chattri Memorial dedication ceremony, Brighton, 1921. Photo courtesy The Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton and Hove.

The gesture itself—the construction of a monument and its unveiling ceremony—was the central signifier of value in this moment of memorializing. Both were public signals that controlled, organized and validated a colonialist regime of knowledge. The monument was unveiled by the Prince of Wales in a military ceremony on 21 February 1921 in a visually symbolic and well-publicized ceremony demonstrating England's worthy intentions towards its colony (Figure 2). A huge flag of the British Raj draped over the monument clearly marked the Chattri as a colonial object. This was removed by the Prince before crowds of English and Indian dignitaries, soldiers and school children. The tangible facts of the monument and the memorial ritual imposed specifically British ways of thinking and doing that were highly colonial. The emotional sensibility aroused by the enacted event would have also stimulated a felt experience that marked the benevolence and generosity of British imperial authority, and the superior honour and value of war sacrifice to the British nation.

The monument's neglect by the India Office after its unveiling confirms the impression that the symbolic performance offered by its construction and opening ceremony was the primary intention by the British government. There were several complaints by passing hikers and the media about the Chattri's neglect after 1921 (Donovan, 2005). It is interesting to consider this abandonment in relation to other Great War monuments in the United Kingdom. By their permanence, impressive physicality and central locations, war monuments did not just organize meanings and values of the time, but also attempted to 'colonize' an imagined future (Ashworth et al., 2007: 3). Winston Churchill expressed in Parliament just after the Great War that the monuments 'would exist in even two thousand years and preserve the memory of a common purpose pursued by a great nation in the remote past. ... and undoubtedly excite the wonder and reverence of future generations' (Summers et al., 2007: 24–5). The same was not true for the Chattri Memorial, visited for 1 day by royalty and forgotten the next on an isolated moor.

The process of colonizing in this first moment of history of the Chattri clearly reflects Said's binary of colonization. The bodies of the men were clearly signed by the British government as different and other than normal British, requiring separate treatment. The monument, using intentional

'oriental' visual design and bearing imperial inscriptions, was a symbolic public relations gesture aimed at sustaining imperial relations over Indians in India. The unveiling ceremony, with the prominence of the celebrity Prince, the Raj, and military ritual practices, deployed affective communication to generate emotions of superiority, benevolence and patriotism. The construction and use of this memorial object demonstrated a paternalistic attitude towards its colonial subjects in India.

De-colonizing—the Legion ceremony

The Chattri grounds fell into disrepair almost immediately following the monument's construction and unveiling. There were reports that the military used the Sussex Downs and the Chattri for military manoeuvres—gunshot holes in the marble structure offer evidence (Donovan, 2005). It was not until in 1951 the Chattri became the site for an annual ceremony of the Royal British Legion, the charity established after the Great War to support veterans. Once a year in June, the Patcham Branch would feature speeches and prayers, laying of wreaths, military music, a concluding parade and refreshments served by the Ladies of the Patcham Women's Section. Organized at a local level by soldiers themselves at a time immediately following the World War II, the goal was to perpetuate remembrance of the War and soldiery sacrifice. The ceremony resembled the Legion's remembrance ceremonies in format, but was performed on a different day—the Chattri was not included in the nation-wide annual observances every November.

The material effect of this annual event shifted the symbolic value at the Chattri. There was transference of meaning from original, very specific colonial and funereal functions, to a broader-based value as site for symbolic rituals of commemoration. This could be read as a continued orientalist positioning as per Said, which assumes that meaning is made in reference to the imperial centre and the events symbolized by this monument are assumed as British and Western. This could also be seen as one form of 'de-colonizing' as the memorial was subsumed within more generalized military remembrance practices. The Chattri became a space for commemoration and remembrance of fallen soldiers in service of the country, more so than connecting to the Indian dead cremated there. As noted by Abousnnouga and Machin (2011), this may have been an indication of a contraction or homogenizing of meaning across war memorials: 'a single core meaning repeated over generations in the form of monuments that invite their audiences to read them in the same way' (p. 194). This single meaning then becomes embedded and naturalized in social consciousness, in 'collective' memory (Nora, 1989) and in denotation of 'value'. The creation of a British Legion memorial service re-assembled the order of things at the Chattri, moving from monumental gesture to colonial India to generalized remembrance of fallen soldiers, with a localized centre of control over how the organization of activities would be arranged.

Yet at the same time, memorializing at the Chattri continued to have non-typical or marginalized elements. While the ceremony resembled the Legion's national remembrance ceremonies in format, a small contingent of Indian representatives continued to visit the monument and attend these services. A programme for the 1970 ceremony indicates the attendance of the High Commissioner for India and a party of Indian-born participants from London. Anecdotal accounts suggest that veterans from the Undivided Indian Ex-Services Association were bussed from Slough, Reading and around the United Kingdom to attend the ceremony. The Indian presence indicates a symbolic and ethical investment on their part, for both officials from India and those of Indian descent living in Britain. To return continuously to this specific place, to maintain a bodily public presence, and to re-enact specific rituals on each occasion, attests to the strength of their motivations and the significance of this location. Such a presence might be analysed from the post-colonial perspectives of either Said or Bhabha. Their attendance might be evidence of an organized attempt to maintain a subservient colonized positioning acknowledging British imperialism,

especially since these were formerly or serving members of the military and bureaucracies of India. Their continued representation at this spot might also be seen as a Bhabbian expression of mimicry, resembling authorized colonial positioning, or, hybridity, expressing a way of being that combined or adapted colonized ways of being into new identities. The ambivalence of both positions was possibly at work here, but their actions formed the base for subsequent shifts in meaning at the site.

So, while the Chattri might have been situated historically as a colonizing space of regulation of Indian subjects by the imperial government, its latter use by the Legion for the gradual homogenization of remembrance discourses indicates a shifting of narrative away from colonial references to an appropriation of the site for British-centric practices, potentially freeing-up the site for further changes in what could be accepted and valued as normal memorializing. Some concurrent meaning-making activities by Indians on site can also be seen as de-colonizing acts by once-colonized subjects. Their bodily presence might have been a more active assertion of political or resistant positioning in relation to imperial England as well as remembrance of a specifically Indian historical event.

De-Colonizing—the Indian ceremony

The annual attempts by veterans to maintain the service at the site activities had reached a point in 1999 that the Legion wished to give up its obligations. The Legion said that members were too old to trek across the field that separated the Chattri Memorial from the road; local observers noted the gradual waning of the event due to the age of participants, difficulties of organizing, and general lack of local involvement (Interview C, 9 December 2013). The cancellation provoked an unanticipated reaction: a newspaper article in *The Observer* interviewed Asian veterans who accused organizers of ‘racism and small-mindedness’ (McVeigh, 2000: 14). The Legion had decided to end the event without consulting the Asian veterans or community groups who attended, provoking their anger. To *withdraw* organization was interpreted as a racist act, indicating a difference in motivation between Legionnaires thinking that they were performing a symbolic act of duty to nation and memory (thus able to withdraw), and those once-colonized participants performing acts of ethnic belonging and identity politics (constructed through body, and ongoing). Nkomo (2011) notes that the first level of resistance for colonial subjects is to understand the power of dominant regimes to create experiences of ‘Otherness’ and inferiority for them (p. 369). In this case some Indian-British participants interpreted the end of the ceremony as an action of oppression and racism, and vocally objected in resistance.

One Brighton resident from the Sikh community, who had never been to the ceremony nor had any connection to the dead soldiers, read the newspaper article and stepped forward to help. The volunteer said in an interview that he had no idea what was in store for him:

I said, ‘I will help with the teas’. That’s why I went in, to help them with the teas. I literally saw myself organizing the tea, giving them cups of tea. ... When I rang them to help them make the tea, they grabbed me. ‘Please, yes, tomorrow! Please, yes that would be great. It would be lovely to see you’. And as I sat there, I realized it was more than just making the tea ... actually it had nothing to do with making the tea. I was so naïve. (Interview A, 27 October 2013)

The memorial service was ‘dropped into the lap’ of the new volunteer: ‘They said, “here’s the key to the gate”’. The volunteer pieced together a semblance of a ceremony, following recollections of Indian attendees about who to invite, the order of service, who would lay wreaths, where they would stand, and what words and music to incorporate. He added to this story:

... The sad part of it is that not one of that committee attended the service on that day, much to my disgust and disappointment. (Interview A, 27 October 2013)

This abandonment by the local Legion began the process of de-colonizing and re-colonizing by ethnic-Indian organizers, which was the subject of the Chattri project's ethnographic research. The first Indian-led memorial service in 2000 was poorly attended, but through the labour of this volunteer, with some support from a local historian and the Director of the Brighton and Hove Black History group, word spread within the Asian community and through the local media. The emphasis was re-placed on the 53 men who were cremated on this spot and the acts of remembrance perpetuated by Indian organizations. The formal order of service developed for the day reflects a hybrid of standard militaristic remembrance rituals, and particular Indian cultural practice.

The change of organizer from British Legion to local Sikh added a layer of significance to the production of meaning and value. On a basic level, the move to volunteer Sikhs and Hindus shifted the organizational space-production and relationship-building from institution to local grassroots individuals. As well, the shift from White Britons to peoples who were not born in the United Kingdom changed the nature of cultural understandings and what aspects of memorializing were valued. The local Asian community articulated those choices through symbolic gestures and embodied practices performed in the space, but also through the ways they verbalized their thoughts about the benefits of the memorial. The re-expressed subjectivity of these new organizers has implications here: this was no longer a space of White institutional value-making with Indian audiences situated as beneficiaries of institutional largess (Schorch, 2013). The participants perceived the identity of the person in control as 'one of them' thus sharing understandings and responsibility. The 'brotherly affection' referred to in the monument inscription now turned to Indian brothers with a sense of obligation to their comrades identified by race and colonial position. Even the shape of the *chattri* architecture was re-appropriated as evidence of Asian-ness.

But at the same time, Indian community members were ambivalent about their own colonial subject positions, characteristic of a de-colonizing sensibility as expressed by Bhabha (1994). Some emphasized, for example, during a focus group meeting, the excellent quality of treatment of Indian soldiers in Brighton and the special visit to the Indian hospital by King George V as distinct points of pride. Their comments about meanings produced by the site and memorial ceremony reflected a mix of standard remembrance jargon and more thoughtful ideas about the value of the evolving processes at the Chattri. There was a desire to put a new stamp on procedures and space (e.g. replacing a Christian priest with a Sikh or Hindu) while still performing the rituals 'correctly' (inviting a Royal representative). The trope of 'sacrificing their lives so we might be here today' was often repeated by participants in interviews and speeches, echoing the prevailing discourses in media and representations about the war. The formal programme at the Chattri in 2013 included speeches and the laying of 18 wreaths by the Queen's representative, British and Indian dignitaries, military, police and service associations, and a descendent of Subedar Manta Singh who was cremated here. This was followed by a Sikh prayer, a Hindu hymn, the Last Post, 2 minutes of silence and a speech by the Queen's representative. The repeated ceremonial components can be interpreted as Bhabhian hybridity, ambivalence and even mimicry, indicators of both colonizing and de-colonizing processes, but all reactions to organizational systems established by the imperial centre.

Part two, then, of the de-colonizing process involved a transfer of ownership of the ritual activities to the local Indian community. While organized to reflect the basic ceremonial procedures of the Legion's remembrance ceremonies, the annual rituals began to exhibit subtle changes to reflect what the new organizers felt was significant and valuable about memorializing there. The participants in the formal service used familiar tropes of war remembrance but combined these with new cultural referents in a classic case of 'almost the same but not quite' (Bhabha, 1994: 85). But assertion of an Indian identity became a significant characteristic of de-colonization, through their visible 'presencing' in the rituals in this space, and through their re-appropriation of the physical structures. This

provided a base from which to build new habits and new informal uses of this space—an affective sense of occasion that is characterized in the next section as ‘re-colonization’.

Re-Colonizing

Studies that adopt postcolonial perspectives are sometimes criticized because their argumentation is always made in reference to the colonizer or the centre. Anti-colonization proponents reason that knowledge-construction should instead be entirely free and offer new or alternative ways of thinking. Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 2014) argues for ‘decolonizing methodologies’ that give authority to indigenous ways of constituting knowledge that are not structured in reference to the centre. It is here that the concept of re-colonizing can be situated, as a cultural and organizational process free from colonial frameworks. While the new activities at the Chattri Memorial are always constituted in relation to that pre-existing monument, re-colonizing in this case looks for transformed or novel meanings and values about memorializing that take root, grow and supplant old ones, a movement without reference to Said’s binary, but a transformative potential suggested by Bhabha’s ‘Third Space’.

The revised annual event organized by the local volunteers has created a unique memorializing process—shaping the experience but shaped by participants. The site and ceremony have combined this re-working of formal elements with new affective usage that enlivens and disorders the proceedings of the day. This has produced a unique sense of ‘occasion’ that reinforces the Chattri’s extraordinary sense of physical location. The sense of occasion on a June afternoon blended formal and informal in solemn, passionate, social, touching but joyous ways. It is hard to imagine that the old ceremony by the Legion created such an affective experience: a liveliness, a sense of chaos, and an openness to unexpected and random cross-cultural encounters. The day began with a journey across farmers’ fields, with the 250 participants arriving by foot, by car and motorbike, and others by hired bus from London. Dress code was not specified, but a profusion of suits, saris, turbans, and military uniforms were joined by t-shirts and blue jeans. The presence of a military biker group in leather regalia added to the heterogeneous sensibility of the space. Marked by a profusion of skin colour from white to various shades of black, clusters of people mingled. These were mostly strangers, but under the unconventional circumstances, and perhaps with a sense of connectedness because of that lack of convention, people moved about the space and talked to each other freely. It is in this heterogeneity, where different cultures interact and informal relationships between bodies take place, that a Third Space was created.

During the June 2013 activities, the entire audience organized themselves around the memorial when the piper played and the speaker and invited dignitaries lined the grass in front of the monument. While obviously a visible public occasion with several familiar acts of remembrance, the passionate weight of the ceremony, judging from the crowd’s reaction, emerged from the singing of the hymn and the 2 minutes of silence. The idea that these significant practices are two occasions of inactivity involving sound is something not normally captured in visual or representational analysis. The Silence—2 minutes suggested by the King on Armistice Day 1919 and continuing henceforth—is the signature event of formal remembrance ceremonies (Bonney, 2013: 11). The Song is a unique Indian cultural referent, but resonated with non-Indians as well. These can be seen as two modes of postcolonial action, both de-colonizing and re-colonizing, with the first activity a clear appropriation by once-colonized bodies of an old colonial form, and the second an innovative incursion of Indian culture in the memorial space. Both immaterial acts structured audience behaviours in direct and material ways. The emotional responses of the closely packed bodies, transmitted electrically through the crowd, imbued both practices with a strong sense of ‘importance’.



Figure 3. Participants assemble for a group photo at the Chattri Memorial ceremony, June 2013. Photo by the author.

The Song was one of two particular practices instigated by the new organizers that put an indelible ‘Indian’ stamp on the proceedings. This singing by Bindu Vachhani of a nationalistic Hindu song about soldiers and sacrifice is now cemented into ritual. According to Bindu,

Wherever this song is sung, everyone just gets up; no one sits on their chair. There are some words, some phrases that touch your heart. At the Chattri ceremony, when everything is quiet, you’re at the perfect place to sing it. (Interview B, 23 March 2014)

The second practice was a playful episode that marked and recorded the annual ceremony wherein willing participants mass and jostle onto the steps and *ghat* platform for cheerful group photos (Figure 3). Both acts were singled out in focus group discussions as ‘valuable’ and ‘essential’, and impossible for organizers to change. One had social significance and the other spiritual: an end-of-ceremony group photo and a poignant Hindu hymn. Both actions brought the racialized body into prominence. These ritualized acts demonstrate a desire to respond to and adopt symbolic actions as shared cultural referents, by taking an old cultural form and transforming it into something new. These are acts of ‘recolonizing’, possessing a life of their own from actual ‘doings’ that have then been marked by participants themselves as possessing special value. In particular, the irreverent group photo—itself an act of remembrance of the day—can be viewed as an ecological transformation, as living bodies invaded and inhabited the old stone monument with new and active liveliness.

The organization of the tea afterwards reaffirmed the sense of energy, spontaneity and unexpectedness. The active cross-cultural, cross-identity aspect of this occasion marked it as a Third Space of disruption and displacement of hierarchical norms—a condition stressed by participants (Bhabha, 1994). The organizers placed great value on the socializing and mingling aspects of the memorialization—voicing in interview the central cultural importance of the tea in the value of the Chattri event: bikers, war vets and ordinary citizens queued for pastries and shared

tables with the Marquess, Indian dignitaries and the Queen's representative (Interview A, 27 October 2013).

These ways of 'doing' re-constituted the space of memorializing in a unique fashion. The informal assembling that happened before and after the formal memorial ceremony played out random forms of action by expected and unexpected participants. These were ongoing, lived, embodied, affective, sensational and novel practices, characteristic of Beyes and Steyaert's (2012) non-representational process of spacing. People reacted with a full range of senses to the extraordinary physical location, the spiritual monument, the playful crowd and the solemn ceremony. The non-cognitive 'affect' engendered by the location, pre-cognitive 'feelings' as our senses dealt with this space, were followed by cognitive 'emotions' expressed as joy, sadness, pride or spirituality (Waterton, 2012). There was also a sense that they were tenuously making it up as they went along—unsure of correct performance so able to behave in spontaneous and novel ways.

For the audience, the performances at the Chattri reflected a 'minor politics' (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012: 51): it signified and affirmed an Indian presence in a British social, political and military milieu, constructed through the performance and reproduced through news media broadcasts about the event. The importance of the publicness of both the formal and informal activities reinforced the sense that there was a minor politics involved. Being 'in public' is a condition of being: a formal, imagined place out there that we enter and participate in symbolically and make an 'appearance' (Warner, 2002). This public appearance or visibility enables a collectivity to achieve solidarity or political power. Interviewees were adamant about the need to be *seen* in this space, to have a public presence in relation to each other, towards 'the English' and for the local media (Interview B, 23 March 2014). The audience through its presence and solidarity in that remote location re-colonized what was once colonial, offering a public affirmation of value and a 'witnessing' that affirmed membership. They felt that the physical process of mutual witnessing and recognition led to cross-cultural negotiation and the transformation of human relations. A distinct 'stranger sociability' has evolved where group members deal with a range of outsiders with whom they may not identify (Calhoun, 2005: 5). Their articulations of these values link the importance of this site to principles that underlie the nature of 'organizing'.

Within this final moment of memorializing, once-colonized people acted through both 'habits of the body' that unconsciously used tacit ways of behaving, but also employed novel and unexpected movements within the space. The emphasis has been placed on these actions as 're-colonizing' activities within a disruptive Third Space, as suggested by Bhabha, which emphasized the affective sensibilities and space-making movements of participants. This is argued here to be something new: as an intentional signification where some participants imagined their performances in this space as highly symbolic—an enactment of Indian cultural, social and spiritual values that communicated a 'minor politics' (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012). Participants felt the inherent politics of mutual witnessing and recognition led to cross-cultural negotiation and the transformation of human relations.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates how memorializing can be seen as a complex combination of objects and practices that organize both meaning and value. It highlights the colonial nature of the form and process of 'organizing' as a space-making system, and the importance of recognizing the perspectives and actions of colonized people as generators of value. The Chattri can be seen as a unique

example of both tangible and intangible memorialization, whose meaning has been shaped and reshaped over the years, dependent on the organizing practices around the central monument. The constructing of a monument to shape meaning in a material way was a 'colonizing' activity: a sign or signification meant to impose a particular understanding of an event or person or idea on current and future generations. That meaning was clearly Orientalist in approach, structured around imperial power and sacrifice to empire, and the continued subjugation of people situated by the British as Other.

But memorializing is also shown to be a felt experience where embodied and intangible practices can confirm, modify or disrupt those authorized significations. The British government reinforced their signification affectively using the prominence of a celebrity Prince and symbols of the Raj to engender feelings of superiority, benevolence and patriotism. In the second moments of history, however, the original importance of the memorial appeared secondary to new meanings generated by similar rituals but with different organizers: the British Legion and the local Indian community.

The object designed and displayed with specific colonial intent was re-organized in a 'de-colonizing' way, displacing those significations through both embodied rituals and affective movements. Both ceremonies adopted elements of movement, gestures, costume and speech that reflected typical UK rituals organized to generate emotions of sadness, pride and honour in relation to the nation. De-colonizing is a process that decentres imperial authority, and as Bhabha points out, this is not always a clean break but manifests through alteration, combination, sometimes imitation as power relations shift for colonizer and the colonized. While the remembrance rituals were an accepted duty to nation in the case of Legion organizers, those in the Indian community were still sorting out their ideas about subjectivity, identity and belonging in the United Kingdom. The first was interpreted as an Orientalist stance described by Said, and the second as an expression of Bhabhian ambivalence, hybridity and mimicry as ethnic-Indian enactors did not quite employ and value the same ritual actions, and moved away from colonial ways of thinking about their actions.

It is from those practices that memorializing as a 're-colonizing' experience has begun to emerge—new acts that re-organized meaning and valuation with little reference to the authorized or normalized discourses. In the re-colonizing moment at the Chattri, a mixed group of strangers created a sense of occasion that was a spontaneous experience—a Third Space in Bhabha's terms, or a case of lived space or 'spacing' that organizes the world unconsciously. A novel Indian cultural ethos asserted affective presence, but was also a conscious cultural act that expressed a resistant voice. The intentional emplacement of their Indian 'presence' in encounters with place and with Others required active not passive exchanges, solidarity, purposeful meaning-making that suggested ongoing potential—a minor but significant political act of the body. This new meaning-making demonstrated memorializing's potential as an emotional activity that facilitates the breaking down of authorized discourses. Thus, while such memorials like the Chattri might not be considered central structures in the organizing of society, we must not underestimate the role they play in the official and everyday organizing and legitimation of what is accepted and valued as 'normal'.

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Notes

1. Data assembly included documentary and news media research, site mapping, and visual documentation using observation, notes and photography of the physical location and material monument through five site visits. Additional historical and media documents such as photos and Pathé videos, and interviews with local residents, revealed the story of the historical dimension of ceremonial practices at the site. The site visits also included observations and recordings of the ritual aspects of the remembrance activities.
2. These were studied over a 1-year period from June 2013 to June 2014 and entailed qualitative research design using interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge-creation. This approach included ethnographic observation at two memorial services and informal conversations with 24 individuals; semi-structured interviews with eight community organizers; a focus group of 10 individuals; and other non-representational methods. These included on-site audio recordings of the researcher's comments and participant conversations, photo documentation, and videography expressions by two participants through video recording of the day's events. Participants included males and females of different ages (youngest estimated 16, oldest 80) from different religious and racial groups (Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, White British, Black).

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